



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **PROJECT WILL DEMONSTRATE SOLID WASTE DISSOLUTION IN HANFORD TANK**

The U.S. Department of Energy's Office of River Protection (ORP) and its tank farms contractor, CH2M HILL Hanford Group (CH2M HILL), have begun a proof-of-concept demonstration of a technology in order to dissolve deposits of solid radioactive waste in Hanford underground tanks.

The demonstration project is being conducted in Tank U-107, a single-shell tank that had originally contained more than 410,000 gallons of waste, approximately 320,000 of which are in a non-liquid form. Approximately 90,000 gallons of liquid waste has been pumped from the tank since the fall of 2001. Now CH2M HILL will demonstrate a method for removing the remaining solid waste.

"This demonstration project is an important step in our efforts to develop technologies and processes that will allow us to accelerate waste retrieval, to get the waste out of the tanks, as we partner with our regulators to determine how to close Hanford tanks," said Delmar Noyes, ORP's Tank Farms Programs and Projects Director.

Waste in Hanford's 177 underground tanks is in three forms -- liquid, saltcake, and sludge. ORP's highest priority is removal of the liquid waste to prevent further leaks from the aging single-shell tanks. CH2M HILL has already removed more than 2.7 million gallons of liquid waste and is continuing an aggressive program to transfer the remaining 395,000 gallons of liquid from the single-shell tanks to newer, sounder double-shell tanks by October 2004.

The solid waste is also radioactive, and ORP is working with its contractors to develop technologies for its removal. Saltcake, which is the subject of the U-107 demonstration, has the consistency of wet beach sand. The technology being tested involves dissolving the saltcake with gentle sprays of water and pumping it out of the tank until the demonstration is completed. CH2M HILL plans to remove approximately 100,000 gallons of waste in this proof-of-concept demonstration.

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When the original equipment was installed in 2001, crews also installed sprinkler assemblies in addition to a pumping system. The demonstration project will give tank farm engineers and DOE managers additional information in several areas.

“In addition to achieving additional risk reduction by removing long-term constituents of concern during pumping operations, this activity will provide input as we move forward to other single-shell tank waste retrieval projects,” explained Joel Eacker, CH2M HILL’s projects vice president.

The Tri-Party agreement calls for retrieving waste from and closing seven Hanford single-shell tanks by 2011. The saltcake dissolution technology is one of the methods being considered for waste retrieval prior to tank closure.

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